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FATAL EFFECTS

OF

Ardent Spirits.

BY REV. EBENEZER PORTER, D. D.



In the winter of 1805, a stranger perished in the snow with a bottle of spirits at his side, in the town where the author then resided. The following pages were occasioned by that event.

NLM

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FATAL EFFECTS

OF

ARDENT SPIRITS.

WO UNTO THEM THAT RISE UP EARLY IN THE MORNING, THAT
THEY MAY FOLLOW STRONG DRINK.—ISAIAH V. 11.

This passage of the sacred volume calls our attention to a subject, which is but rarely the theme of the pulpit. The sin which the prophet here condemns, was not peculiar to his own countrymen, nor to his own time. Probably it has never been peculiar to any period, or to any people. However this may be, no one can doubt that the reprehension and warning contained in the passage are, eminently, applicable to our own times. It is no new event, in this depraved world, that impiety should grow with the growth of prosperity. The richest soil bears the rankest weeds. The vices of men flourish most in the midst of fertility and plenty. I need not point you back to Egypt or Sodom, in search of facts, to verify this sentiment. Open your eyes, and the proof is before you; proof, that is furnished from every district and village of our country; proof, that can hardly fail to produce, in your minds, both conviction and alarm.

Shall I call your attention to that decline of public morals, which, in too many instances, is manifested in direct contempt of God, his name, his Sabbath, and his sacred word? Shall I tell you that in this land of light, and liberty, and blessings unexampled, there are such sins as ingratitude, pride, prodigality, and blasphemy?—such men as openly spurn the restraints of the Gospel, and revile its divine Author? Shall I mention the latitude of licentious presses, and lawless tongues, which sport with the peace of the living, and the reputation of the dead?—or that vile thirst for gain which, in many hearts, has extinguished every worthy sentiment; which has multiplied idols of gold, silver, and paper; has reduced fraud to system, and made iniquity a trade?

Such things are deeply lamented by every man that fears God, or loves his country ; and such things are boldly condemned, at least, by every *minister* who is worthy of his office. But my present design lies within narrower limits. I wish to withdraw your attention from every other subject, and fix it upon the single sin of *intemperate drinking* !

Like every other practice which has many friends, this is often excused under fair and smooth names. But its proper "name is *legion*." It deserves not apology, but reprobation. It may be safely affirmed that, in this country, if in no other, it has proved a greater foe to human life and happiness, than war, pestilence, and famine. How many that were born with reason, has it transformed into idiots ! How many men of property and usefulness, has it turned into contemptible drones ! How many families has it driven from their dwellings to the streets :—from affluence, to indigence and woe ! Still, like an inundation, it rises, it swells around us. It breaks through all restraints of authority and decency. It sweeps away our young men to infamy and the grave. It defies our laws. It threatens wide and dire destruction to our morals, and to our precious and venerable institutions. Now and then, you see it condemned in some corner of a newspaper, or hear some solitary voice raised against it : while the mass of our citizens, our civil tribunals, our churches, and many of our pulpits, slumber over the horrible iniquity. This sin doubtless prevails less in some places than in others ; but wherever it prevails *at all*, it is alarming. There are many whose fondness for strong drink is for a long time kept under such exact restraint, as scarcely to be perceived, even by their intimate acquaintance. Occasionally, the appetite is indulged ; with so much caution, however, and so much under the veil of circumstances that, perhaps for years, no injury is sustained by themselves—no suspicion excited in others. But by degrees, this lurking propensity grows in strength. The man rises up *early*, that he may go to his bottle. This holds the first place, in his waking thoughts. For a season, he is satisfied, perhaps, with a *morning dram*. Unsuspecting of danger, his relish increases by indulgence ; till, in the emphatical lan-

guage of the prophet, he is given up to *follow* strong drink. With slow, but steady progress, the habit becomes inwrought into the constitution: the man reels in the street; is callous to shame and remorse; loses the use of his limbs, his tongue, his reason—in one word, he is ruined:—health, estate, character, body and soul, *ruined*.

The ways in which men come to this calamitous state, are various.

Some fall under the influence of strong drink by *using it as a medicine*. To remove some pain of the stomach, or to restore exhausted strength, is their apology for the first stages of intemperance.*

With others, the habit commences by drinking at *set times*. Many, in early or middle life, adopt the practice of using spirits at their meals, and before they are aware, are drawn into confirmed drunkenness.

Others become followers of strong drink by *frequenting places of resort*, where they are peculiarly exposed to temptation. There, by degrees, the warnings of conscience are stifled, and the fear of God is extinguished. To shun the reproach of fools, or to be reputed social and liberal, they sacrifice their sober judgment, resign themselves as victims to worse than iron bondage, and part with their money, their credit, and their senses, as the price of their own undoing.

In short, it is not merely upon absolute intoxication that our censure deservedly falls; but upon every excess in drinking, which leads to this shameful vice. Many, who have never been seen to stagger with strong drink, may truly be denominated drunkards begun.

Let us now consider some of the miserable EFFECTS which result from intemperate drinking.

1. It destroys INDUSTRY. Our natures and circumstances, in this world, render some lawful occupation essential to our happiness. God had no sooner made man, than he assigned him a regular employment. It was among the

* “I have known many men and women, of excellent characters and principles, who have been betrayed by occasional doses of gin or brandy to ease the cholic, into the love of spirituous liquors, insomuch that they have afterwards fallen sacrifices to their fatal effects.”

precepts which he uttered, in solemn majesty, from Sinai, "Six days shalt thou labour." The universal and perpetual duty of industry is taught in the Scriptures, by many express precepts, and by many honorable examples: but it is enough to say, its indispensable obligation is taught by the example of the Saviour. The mischiefs which arise to individuals, and to community, from habits of sloth, must be obvious to every one who has had his eyes open on the world around him. We need not the wisdom of Solomon to know, that "idleness will clothe a man in rags;" nor the inspiration of Paul to perceive why men ought, "with quietness, to work," if they would "eat their *own* bread."

Now the fact is unquestionable, that *drunkenness* and *idleness* are kindred vices. Where you find either, you commonly find both. The man who becomes a follower of strong drink, becomes, for the same reason, a neglecter of all regular business. The hours that should be spent in the field or the shop, he loiters away in vain company. His credit sinks:—he is stamped for a ruined man, by all his sober acquaintance. Hence the sage advice of Dr. Franklin, to young tradesman: "The sound of your hammer at five in the morning or nine at night, heard by your creditor, makes him easy six months longer. But if he sees you at a billiard table, or hears your voice at a tavern, when you should be at work, he sends for his money the next day."

2. Following strong drink destroys HEALTH. It is the more important to be explicit on this point, because many contract a love of spirits by supposing their effects to be salutary to the constitution. Plutarch has long been reputed a wise man. Let us hear his opinion of intemperance. "Of all the Apollyons or destroyers of nerves, health and life, this is the greatest; and I have no doubt but it has broken down more constitutions, brought on more distempers, and sent more people to an early grave, than all the vices of this bedlam world put together."

An eminent physician of our country enumerates a list of stubborn diseases as the common effects of spirits, and adds, "It would take up a volume to describe how much *other* disorders, natural to the human body, are increased

and complicated by them." He cites the authority of two medicinal writers, to confirm the sentiment that, even under the extreme heat of tropical climates, ardent spirits always diminish the strength of the body, render it more susceptible of disease, and unfit for any service in which vigor or activity is required. How often do we hear the remark, that, fifty or sixty years ago, men were far more athletic than they are at present. There can be no room to doubt, that the extravagant modern use of ardent spirits has contributed much to this degeneracy. A slow and secret poison undermines the constitution. Many young men who might have been an honour to their country, and a blessing to the world, are lost to both. The spring of life is loaded with the decrepitude of old age.*

3. Following strong drink produces POVERTY. Time has not impaired the truth of these ancient maxims: "Through idleness of the hands, the house droppeth through." "He that followeth after vain persons, shall have *poverty enough*." Habits of sloth and intemperance are heavier taxes on a man's property than all others. If the expense of strong drink was all, a tolerable estate would outlast almost any drunkard's life: whereas, affluence often vanishes before intemperance, and rags and beggary follow after it. "Money, lost or wasted, may be recovered: not so with wasted time: the loss is absolute, and no other prodigality is so impoverishing." The drunkard's account is commonly a short one. Business neglected—foolish bargains contracted—credit ruined—land, house and furniture mortgaged, and then the sheriff and the prison stand ready

* "Drunkenness destroys by retail, at all times, and every where. The poor wretches, who abandon themselves to it, are subject to frequent inflammations of the breast, and to pleurisies which often carry them off in the flower of their age. If they sometimes escape through these violent maladies, they sink, a long time before the ordinary approach of old age, into all its infirmities. Their bodies, worn out by excess, do not concur with the operation of remedies; and diseases of weakness resulting from this cause, are almost always incurable. It seems happy enough that society loses nothing in parting with these subjects, who are a dishonour to it; and whose brutal souls are, in some measure, dead, long before their carcasses."

Tissot's Causes of Popular Maladies.

to close up the reckoning. What has been said of another vice, is emphatically true of this: "It breakfasts with plenty, dines with poverty, and sups with infamy!"*

4. Following strong dring impairs REASON. An intoxicated man is, for the time, in a complete delirium. He is as really bereft of reason as any lunatic on earth. If he falls under the power of intemperance as a habit, the understanding gradually becomes torpid, the memory, and all other faculties of the mind, sink into a mopish inactivity, till, at last, he becomes exactly that useless and contemptible creature described in one comprehensible syllable—a *sot*. Would it be sin and folly for one to destroy his own limbs? How much more to destroy his reason? He that was *born* an idiot, or deprived of his senses by sickness or disaster, is to be pitied. But he that *makes himself* a mad-man or an idiot, can never be sufficiently censured.

5. The habit of following strong drink unfits its subjects for the duties and comforts of SOCIAL LIFE.—What object in nature is more loathsome and contemptible than a drunken man? Does he attempt to walk? See how he staggers. His tottering limbs scarcely sustain their shameful load. Does he attempt to speak? If his organs of utterance are not suspended, how foolish, obscene and impious is his language! He has "neither the speech nor carriage, the sense nor civility, that belongs to a human being." He is utterly unfit for any sort of company; unfit to associate with men, for they have reason; unfit to associate with brutes, for, as one remarks, "the brutes are what God made them, but the drunkard is what his own lusts and the devil have made him." From the dignity of a man, he is reduced below the rank of a swine.

* A man, who had established a tippling house, was about to erect his sign, and requested his neighbour's advice what inscription to put on it. The man replied, I advise you to write on it, 'BEGGARS MADE HERE.' The distinguished American physician, before cited, describes, in nearly the following language, the scenes of misery which mark the track of spiritous liquors. 'Houses without windows, gardens without fences, fields without tillage, barns without roofs, and children without principles, clothing, morals, or manners.' 'Ardent spirits,' says he, 'crowd the sheriff's docket, fill our jails with criminals, our hospitals with patients, and our church-yards with premature graves.'

The poor maniac, whose reason is taken away by the sovereign hand that gave it, finds a friend in every one he meets; and every hospitable door opens to receive the hapless wanderer, and give him shelter from the cold or the inclement sky. But what decent family does not dread the intrusion of a senseless, noisy, filthy drunkard? Scarcely is his company to be endured, even by his nearest friends. Intemperance made Nabal "such a man of Belial that one could not speak to him." How rude was his reply to the civil request of David, for a little food, to support the companions of his affliction. Under the strong excitement of circumstances, David suffered the saint to sink into the soldier, and marched, sword in hand, to chastise the insolence of Nabal. There was an excellent woman with a drunken husband, and four hundred armed men coming to destroy the family. What could be done? A brute or a block was as fit to give advice as Nabal. The resentment of David was soon appeased by the prudence and generosity of Abigail. When she returned home, not a word could she speak to her husband:—he was "*very drunken*." Next morning when "the wine was gone out of him," she told him how narrowly the family had escaped. Then his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. Whether by this shock of terror, or by the general habit of intoxication, we know not, but the man lived only ten days afterwards, and it does not appear that any one lamented his death.

6. Following strong drink leads to many OTHER VICES. Some of these have already been noticed, especially *idleness*. But it is to be added, that few rest in mere idleness. Both body and mind must have some employment. Hence the maxim, "When the devil finds a man idle, he takes him into his own service."

Drinking leads to *gaming*. Idle and intemperate men seldom know how to kill time without recourse to games of chance. The influence of these to deprave the heart, destroy the morals, and waste the substance of their votaries, it is needless to describe. Multitudes have been such proficient in this school of vice, as soon to become knaves, blockheads, or beggars.

It leads to *lying*. When estate and character are ruin-

ed, and conscience strangled to death in strong drink, no regard to truth is to be expected. In such a case, promises are made and broken without ceremony; the tongue becomes the organ of imposition in business; every principle of integrity or honour is laid out of the question, when there is opportunity to take advantage of the ignorance, the credulity, or the necessity of a fellow creature. This is not all. From simple falsehood the transition is easy to *perjury*. Go into our courts of justice, and see at how cheap a rate, men of this character are hired or flattered to bear false witness! How easily they sport with the most tremendous obligations! How gravely they can tell a lie, under oath, and that without a "wry face!" I am serious on this point. It has come to that pass, that any man, who is willing to make ardent spirits the instrument of iniquity, may find witnesses in *any cause*, ready to testify *any thing* that he shall dictate. Hence, in a multitude of cases the name of the everlasting God is invoked but in careless and impious mockery; and the alarming sin of trifling with appeals to heaven, become so familiar, as scarcely to be accounted a crime.*

It leads to *profane swearing*. The folly and impiety of this practice admit of no apology. No motive of appetite or interest, no constitutional propensity can be pleaded as an excitement to this vice. It is indeed such an outrage on the first principles of religion, reason and decency, as ought not to be expected from any one in the sober exercise of his mental faculties.

It leads to *tale bearing* and *slander*. To the vile and vulgar tongues of drunkards, these are favourite employments. When the little stock of understanding, which nature gave, is drowned in intoxication, they have still one precious attribute of human nature left to distinguish them from irrational animals. Dogs can bark, and mules can bray, but *men* only can *laugh*. In these noisy circles, however, there is often more of malignity than levity. Here the characters of the absent are held up to reproach. Here religion

* Sir William Temple says, that, in Spain, no man could, formerly, be admitted to testify in a court, who had once been convicted of drunkenness.

is denounced as priest-craft ; and its professors and ministers stigmatised as weak bigots, or designing knaves. One who has lost the use of his limbs and senses, may have wisdom enough left to say all this, and yet say nothing new. The same things were, probably, said by some of Lot's neighbours ; and twenty eight centuries ago, the great and good king David was the "drunkard's song."

It leads to *contention*. The slothful servant, described by our Saviour, began to "smite his fellow servants," at the same time that he began "to eat and drink with the drunken." Three fourths of all the vulgar quarrels which happen, proceed from ardent spirits. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging. Who hath wo? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? —They that tarry long at the wine." How often do men meet in good humour, then drink to excess, talk nonsense, fancy themselves insulted, take fire within, blaze at the mouth, rave, threaten, come to blows ; and then the majesty of the law must be prostituted to settle a quarrel of fools. Long ago, Seneca spake of those who "let in a thief at the mouth to steal away the brains." In such a case, the stupidity of a brute is often united with the fury of a demoniac. Nay, the man possessed among the tombs was comparatively harmless :—he hurt only himself. But how often does the drunken revel end in the cry of murder? How often does the hand of the intoxicated man,

"In one rash hour,
"Perform a deed that haunts him to the grave."*

7. Following strong drink EXTINGUISHES THE BEST SENSIBILITIES OF THE HUMAN HEART. Did the proper limits of the subject allow a minute illustration of this point, I would offer myself an advocate for the poor brutes. I would plead

* Judge Rush, in a charge to a Grand Jury of Pennsylvania, says : "I declare in this public manner, and with the most solemn regard to truth, that I do not recollect an instance, since my being concerned in the administration of justice, of a single person being put on his trial for man-slaughter, which did not originate in drunkenness ; and but few instances of trials for murder, where the crime did not spring from the same unhappy cause."

the cause of the faithful horse, and ox, so often worn out with starving and stripes; and subjected to intolerable hardships from drunken masters.

But in other respects the followers of strong drink are guilty of more aggravated cruelty. Will these men say, If we suffer for our own indiscretion, it is nothing to others? Is it nothing, to cast yourselves as useless drones and burdens on community? Nothing to reduce them to the painful alternative of seeing you starve, or feeding you with the hand of charity? Nothing, to blast the hopes of your dearest friends? Ye whose hearts are not past feeling, let me point you to the flowing tears of an aged father and mother, whose grey hairs are brought down with sorrow to the grave. Once they hailed the birth of a promising son. They nursed him in the cradle of infancy. They watched over the pillow of sickness. Their affections grew, with his growing years, and anticipated the time when he should become the solace of their declining days, and a blessing to the world. Now he is a follower of strong drink. At midnight, corroding care preys on their hearts: their slumbers are invaded by the distressing inquiry, *where is our son?* He that was the hope of our helpless years, sports with our admonitions, our prayers, our tears, our entreaties, and is a companion of riotous men.

Or will you attend me to the solitary cottage, which intemperance has made the abode of wretchedness. Scarcely does its tattered covering afford a shelter from the cold wind and the drenching rain. See an amiable woman, bred, perhaps, in ease and prosperity, now destitute of every earthly comfort. The bloom of her face is succeeded by premature wrinkles; and the countenance that once beamed with joy, has become meagre and pale with suffering. Helpless, friendless, there she sits, the victim of grief. Her poor children around her, naked, shivering, starving, cry for bread. He that solemnly covenanted to provide for her in sickness, and in health, leaves his family to want and woe; breaks from all the duties and endearments of home, to gratify a vile appetite. Behold the husband, the father, returning from the tavern or grog-shop, a stammering, reeling drunkard! His stomach heaves: his tongue

curses and threatens : what deed of violence is he not liable to commit ! Oh, the pangs of his heart broken wife, and affrighted children ! Is this a fiction ? Would to God it were. But how many wretched mothers, with their helpless offspring, even in this land of plenty, are left to drag out a life of suffering ; while the men designated by God and nature, to be their friends and guardians, are wasting their substance in rioting and drunkenness !

8. Following strong drink produces a MISERABLE DEATH. In the first place, it renders men totally unprepared for that hour. It implies the neglect of religious duties. If any one requires proof of this, let him only attempt to conceive of a man staggering home at midnight, and undertaking to pray with his family, or to retire for secret devotion. The thing would be manifestly absurd : it would be grossly impious. How certainly must the company and habits of such a man stupify the conscience, and exclude serious reflection from the mind ! This is not all. During actual intoxication he is as really incapable of repentance, or any other religious exercise, as a brute or a stone ; and therefore is utterly unfit to die. Let this be remembered while it is added,—he is peculiarly exposed to die, and to die *suddenly*. You have seen, that he is more liable to fatal diseases than sober men. He is also more liable to fatal disasters. Recollect what befel Benhadad, when he was drinking himself drunk in his tent. Recollect what happened to Nebuchadnezzar and his nobles, when they were intoxicated. And within your own acquaintance, what numbers have been instantly killed by falls : how many burnt to death, frozen, shot, or drowned, in a fit of drunkenness.

There is solemn meaning in the caution : “ Take heed, lest at any time, your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and so that day come upon you unawares.”

It may be thought that I have entered upon the discussion of this subject with zeal disproportioned to its importance. But convinced as I am that the extravagant use of ardent spirits is a prevailing sin of our day, I have deemed it my duty as a religious teacher to employ my feeble voice against a custom so fatal to the morals, the lives, and

the souls of my fellow men, and so threatening to the welfare of my native country. The more this subject is considered, the more alarming does it appear.* The cry of our intemperance has gone up to heaven. Probably this infant country has already reached a maturity in this shameful vice which is without a parallel in the history of the world. Probably no other nation, ancient or modern, in proportion to its whole population, ever had so many male and female drunkards as this. Certainly, in no other, have the means of intoxication been procured with so much facility, and used with so little restraint, by all sorts of people.

What then shall be done? Shall men of reflection sit still, and see a mortal disease preying on the vitals of community, without using any efforts to provide a remedy? The existence of the evil cannot be denied. Shall it be thought already too inveterate to admit the hope of reformation? Then our ruin is inevitable. It requires no supernatural penetration to see, that without a *thorough reformation*, the day of our calamity is at hand.

My brethren, from one who is by office, a public re-prover, no apology can be expected for plain dealing, when he is called to bear testimony against prevailing wickedness. If, in such a case, it is painful to speak, it is, for the same reason, criminal to be silent. "Son of man,

* A report from the national treasury, in the year 1805, states that duties actually accrued to government on 7,641,207 gallons of foreign spirits; and 2,604,611 gallons of wine. The duties arising from this single source, amounted to 3,026,696 dollars and 60 cents. If this sum had been exacted in the form of a direct tax, it would, doubtless, have excited many murmurs. It will be perceived, that this statement does not include the immense quantities of domestic spirits, which are made from grain and other materials. The number of distilleries, when they were registered by public authority, if I mistake not, was about thirty thousand; and their increase since that time, has surpassed all conjecture. At a moderate computation the spirits consumed in the United States, every year, would load 100,000 waggons, which in compact order, would extend more than a thousand miles; and the annual expense of this strong drink, to the people, if it were paid in silver, would exceed 600 tons of dollars!--Where will these things end? If the inhabitants of this land must *pay* for a flood of ardent spirits from year to year, and what is worse, if they must *drink* it, what are our prospects!

I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me." Let me hope then, that this subject will be deemed worthy of serious consideration, by several distinct classes of people.

1. It claims the attention of those who are, by occupation, *retailers of ardent spirits*. It is readily admitted, that in this employment, it may sometimes be difficult to do that which is exactly right. But it is, doubtless, possible to sell spirits, without holding out a temptation to tippling. Whatever profit or credit may be thought to arise from this, it can be no equivalent for doing a thing, that is wrong in itself, and forbidden by the laws. The word of God says, "Wo unto him that giveth his neighbour drink; that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also." Men are ingenious enough to find incentives to vice, without the aid of others, to present them in the most alluring forms. Those who are entrusted with the business of selling spirits in small quantities, are in a sense entrusted with the morals and lives of their fellow men. Their situation is highly responsible. They ought to be men of strict integrity. In all civilized society, there must be houses of entertainment for strangers, and for the accommodation of men who meet on necessary business. But when taverns are made places of resort for purposes of idleness and vice, they are perverted from the proper end of their institution, and become a public nuisance. It has been supposed, that a multiplicity of taverns, "is an evil inseparably attendant on republican governments." Probably no country has exhibited so striking proof of this as our own. In some parts of it, certainly, the evil has become so flagrant that it ought to awaken the deep solicitude of all sober men.*

* In the city of New-York, alone, seventeen hundred tavern licences were granted, for the year 1808. The committee of the Humane Society, after investigating the subject, remark, in an excellent address to the public, "These petty taverns exhibit perpetual scenes of riot and disorder. Hence law-suits and criminal prosecution. Hence that day which the religion and laws of the country have set apart for the public worship of God is openly profaned. Supposing that the city contains 14,000 families, which is a prob-

2. The subject claims the attention of *magistrates*, and of all who are concerned in executing the laws. Do these laws regulate the selling of spirits? Do they forbid drunkenness, and point out how it shall be punished? Why is it not punished? Shall these laws sleep in the statute book? Shall it be said that they cannot be executed? They *can* be executed. They *must* be executed, or by an immutable law of Providence, our country is doomed to ruin. Social blessings cannot long be the portion of any people among whom the first principles of morality cease to be regarded. Vain and visionary are all those theories which promise men liberty or happiness, while they are slaves to vice. To the people of the United States, especially, the voice of experience speaks, on this subject, with alarming authority. Where are our sister republics, of ancient and of modern days? They have all perished by one fatal disease, the moral corruption of their citizens. —Ours is the only popular government that exists on the globe. Do you imagine that our safety is suspended on the intervention of miracles? Do you hope that the stated course of human events will be inverted for *our* preservation? Be not deceived. We are rushing into the same gulf of licentiousness where other free governments have expired. Already the symptoms of approaching death are upon us. Vice lifts its head without shame or fear, and bids defiance to control. Already the laws which were provided in better days, to guard the vital interests of community, we are gravely told, *cannot be executed!* Our executive officers shrink from their high trust, as guardians of the public welfare, and yield to the prevalence of iniquities which they have not fortitude to withstand. You know that this is the language of truth and fact. To draw

able calculation, it will appear that one seventh of its inhabitants is maintained by selling poison to the rest." Concerning the same sort of places for vending spirits in Pennsylvania, one of the chief magistrates remarks, "These are the polluted fountains that send forth constant streams to corrupt and demoralize the people. Here our youth, the growing hopes of our country, are initiated in all the mysteries of iniquity, and lay the foundation of those destructive habits that never forsake them. Here they are taught to practise the dialect of infernal spirits, and to rival the very demons in the use of profane and blasphemous expressions."

examples only, from the subject before us ; you see men guilty of actual drunkenness from year to year, till their families are undone, and themselves stripped of property, reputation, and reason : while the sword of civil authority has almost ceased to be any terror to such evil doers. Where is the stern virtue of our forefathers, whose frown was so efficacious to suppress vice ! Where are those venerable magistrates, whose purity in principle, and decision in action, gave dignity to office, and energy to the laws !

“ These suns are set !
“ O ! rise, some other such, or all that’s past
“ Is empty talk of old achievements, and
“ Despair of new.”

If the public sentiment cannot be awakened to perceive that much greater fidelity is indispensable, in executing the laws, against the abuse of ardent spirits, what shall counteract its increasing, fatal influence, to prostrate the morals of the land !

3. The subject claims the attention of *parents*. It is an office of natural affection, to save from danger, if possible, those whom you love. This care is especially confided to you, as it respects your own families : and you have now seen an urgent occasion for its exercise. If you can preserve your sons from becoming victims to strong drink, you will do them and the world an infinite kindness. This duty is worthy of all your watchfulness, and all your wisdom. You cannot engage in it too soon, nor persevere in it too steadily. As you regard the temporal and eternal welfare of your immortal offspring, restrain them from mingling with vile associates, and visiting places of dangerous resort. From their tenderest years let them be impressed with an habitual abhorrence of drunkenness. But remember that the best counsels will avail nothing, unless enforced by a proper *example*. If you have been in the free use of spirits at home and abroad, be it your first concern to reform *yourselves*. Say not, that in this practice you *mean no harm*. Can you seriously offer this apology for an example, which, you must know, may tempt your children to ruin, and ripen them for an early grave ? Say not, that you drink no more than is for your comfort,

and are resolved to restrain yourselves within the bounds of temperance. Perhaps you will. But should it be so, are you certain that the same limits will restrain the next generation? As well you may expect the torrent, foaming down the precipice, to stop in its course.

Is it really so that a man in sound health, and in fair weather, cannot live from morning to night, or cannot go a mile, and go home again, without *drinking spirits*? Your fathers could do such things: and men did even breathe, and walk, and *labour* too, before ardent spirits were made. It is freely admitted, that they are useful in certain cases, especially in exposure to extreme changes or fatigue, or in the decline of age. Solomon allows strong drink "to him that is ready to perish." But in *common cases*, if you have adopted the opinion that it is for your comfort, ask any sound physician, and I am sure he will tell you, that you "sin against your own life."

4. This subject claims the attention of all *reflecting men*, whose employment or reputation in community affords the means of doing good. In this class, may I not be allowed to address *physicians* as holding an important rank? As guardians of our health, their profession is highly respectable; and on a subject like this, gives them a special influence over public opinion. It cannot be necessary to describe the various methods in which that influence may be employed to discourage or promote intemperance: and every benevolent man must see reasons enough, why it should be properly employed.*

May I not especially hope, that the subject of this discourse will be solemnly regarded by all *professors of religion*?

* In the healthiest parts of Connecticut, the average number of deaths is about one out of one hundred, annually. Assuming this as the ratio of mortality for our whole population, and supposing that one fifteenth part of the deaths is occasioned by spirits, it will appear that in the State, about a hundred and seventy die every year, from this cause. This is not offered as a precise, but as, probably, a very moderate estimate. What other single cause among us is so destructive of human life! What evil so much deserves the united reprobation of all who are friends to human happiness! In Connecticut, no man ever fell by a *duel*; but thousands have fallen by *strong drink*!!

ion? If its importance must be admitted by those who acknowledge the obligations of conscience, and common decency, how much more by those who profess to feel the sacred obligations of *piety*. Brethren, can you see without concern, the awful degeneracy of morals around you? Can you look forward to the consequences of these things without deep solicitude? Dare you, by your *own example*, contribute to increase the flood of licentiousness which threatens to overwhelm the land? "The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God." Vain are statutes and sermons against TIPPLING, while it receives countenance from the practice of sober and respectable men, and while even members of Christian churches betray, in many instances, a shameful fondness for ardent spirits.

Lastly :—The subject eminently claims the attention of the *rising generation*. Many young men adopt the absurd opinion, that excessive drinking denotes a liberal mind, and is a trait of a gentleman. This opinion has ruined thousands, who entered upon life with fair prospects of usefulness and respectability. By all the friendship which I bear to you, *young men*, I warn you to beware of the sin which has now been condemned. As you regard your character, your comfort, or your salvation, shun the company, shun the places, where this sin will beset you. The moment you become familiar with it, you are undone. Chained down in iron bondage, your life will become miserable, and your name contemptible. Avoid the men that love strong drink. Their feet go down to death: their steps take hold on hell. If you find yourselves inclined to go in this path of evil men, set the grave on your right hand, and eternity before you. Pause,——and escape the ruin.

Brethren, I have done. Should the sin of following strong drink increase among us, I stand acquitted before God and you, in having made an honest effort to arrest its progress. If any thing wrong has been spoken, I entreat you to forgive it: if any thing true and important, I charge you to remember it, and profit by it. The discourse is committed to the faithful application of your consciences, and to the blessing of God.

STUBBORN FACTS.

"On my entrance into the printing-house of Watts, near Lincoln's-Inn-Fields," says B. Franklin, "I worked at first as a pressman, conceiving that I had need of bodily exercise, to which I had been accustomed in America, where the printers work alternately as compositors and at the press. I drank nothing but water. The other workmen, to the number of about fifty, were great drinkers of beer. I carried occasionally a large form of letters in each hand, up and down stairs, while the rest employed both hands to carry one. They were surprised to see by this and many other examples, that the American Aquatic, as they used to call me, was stronger than those who drank porter. The beer boy had sufficient employment during the whole day in serving that house alone. My fellow pressman drank every day a pint of beer before breakfast, a pint with bread and cheese for breakfast, one between breakfast and dinner, one at dinner, one again about six o'clock in the afternoon, and another after he had finished his day's work. This custom appeared to me to be abominable: but he had need he said of all this beer, in order to acquire strength to work.

I endeavoured to convince him that the bodily strength furnished by the beer, could only be in proportion to the solid part of the barley dissolved in the water of which the beer was composed: that there was a larger portion of flour in a penny loaf, and that consequently if he ate this penny loaf, and drank a pint of water with it, he would derive more strength from it than from a pint of beer. This reasoning, however, did not prevent him from drinking his accustomed quantity of beer, and paying every Saturday night a score of more than four or five shillings a week for this beverage: an expense from which I was wholly exempt.

My example prevailed with several of them to renounce their practice of bread and cheese and beer, and they procured, like me, from a neighbouring house, a good basin of warm gruel, in which was a small slice of butter, with toasted bread and nutmeg. This was a much better breakfast, which did not cost more than a pint of beer, and at the same time preserved the head clearer."

A vulgar error prevails, which is, that strong liquors or ardent spirits are essential to bodily strength. This false opinion is partly grounded on the idea of a nutritious property in those liquors, and partly perhaps on a logical error in using the word strong, as being necessarily connected with strengthening the animal body. The first notion is entirely wrong, since it is proved by continual evidence that strong liquors are inimical to animal life throughout the creation, and that no living animal or plant can be supported by such fluids, but that on the contrary they all become sickly and perish under their influence. Nourishing substances require to be of a similitude with the substances to be nourished; and the constituent materials of man and the whole of the living creation contain no such compositions as those fermented and spirituous liquors. Such liquors cannot therefore be reckoned useful in the way of nourishing or maintaining the principal materials of the human body. But it may be argued that strong liquors help the stomach to digest and stimulate the actions of the blood vessels and the nervous system. I presume that no man would give a lamb, a calf, a chicken, or a duck, such liquors, with a hope of rendering it sooner fat and of sweeter flesh, even if such liquors were so cheap as to make it an economical process. Yet many parents do this by their infant children.

For people to drink spirits in cold weather in order to be warm, is a mere fallacy. The glow of warmth produced by strong drink, is not only soon over but is followed by a weak and chilled state of the frame.

This is evinced by many facts; and among the rest, the following. In the winter of 1796, a vessel belonging to Connecticut, was wrecked on an island off the shores of Massachusetts. There were seven persons on board. It was night. Five of them resolved to quit the wreck, and seek for shelter on shore. To prepare for the attempt, four of them drank freely of spirits; the fifth would drink none. They all leaped into the water; one was drowned before he reached the shore. The other four came to land: and in a deep snow, and piercing cold, directed their course to a distant light. All that drank spirits failed and

stopped, and froze one after another. The man that drank none, reached the house, and still lives to enjoy the rewards of temperance.

This is the cause why sailors are so frequently frozen when shipwrecked in cold weather. They feel a sort of dread and desperation; they drink freely, and then make the attempt to escape. When they reach the shore, the glow of warmth the spirits had occasioned, having subsided, they are left in a chilled state, prepared to freeze, as they do; while other persons from accidents, such as breaking through the ice, falling into the water, &c. are equally wet, equally exposed, equally distant from shelter, in weather equally cold, yet do not freeze.

It is objected, that it is excess, and not the temperate use of spirits that produces such fatal effects in cold weather. But the following fact shows the contrary.

A brig from Russia, laden with iron, ran aground upon a sand bar, that makes off from Newport Island. The master was disposed to unlade and get her off, but the weather was extremely cold, and none could be found to undertake the task; as the vessel was at a distance from shore, covered with ice, and exposed to the full effect of wind and cold.

Captain G——, a packet master of Newport, respected for his integrity, and who abstained from the use of spirits, at length engaged to unlade the brig and procure his hands. Six men were employed in the hold, which (the vessel being bilged) was full of water. They began the work with free, but temperate use of spirits: thinking they should need it then if ever. But after two hours labor they all gave out; chilled through. After refreshing and warming, they made a second attempt; using cider only the remainder of the day. They now succeeded better, but still they suffered much from cold. The second day they consented to follow the directions of Captain G——, and drank nothing but milk porridge, made rich, and taken as hot as the stomach would bear it. The weather was equally severe as before; but they were now able to continue their work from four to seven hours at a time; and then came up, as Captain G——expressed it, “smoking hot.” With this simple beverage handed

round every half hour, they continued their work from day to day, with not one drop of spirits, till the iron was all handed out and brought to shore, and not a man had a finger frozen.

And experience has taught not a few, that if people when travelling in cold weather, would wholly omit drinking spirituous liquors, they would feel the effects of cold much less : because the glow of warmth occasioned by drinking at one stage, leaves them in this chilled state, long before they reach the next.

In a most severe frost, which happened about eighteen years since, the hackney-coachmen of London suffered exceedingly by the practice of drinking ardent spirits : many died in consequence of dram-drinking ; while those who resorted to the use of tea, which a few did, not only weathered the cold, but acquired health and activity from their regimen.

Let it not be said, ardent spirits have become necessary from habit in harvest, and in other seasons of uncommon and arduous labour. The habit is a bad one, and may be easily broken. Let but half a dozen farmers in a neighbourhood combine to allow higher wages to their labourers than are common, and a sufficient quantity of any wholesome liquor, and they may soon, by their example, abolish the practice of giving them spirits. In a little while they will be delighted with the good effects of their association. Their grain and hay will be gathered into their barns in less time, and in a better condition than formerly, and of course at a less expense, and a hundred disagreeable scenes from sickness, contention and accidents will be avoided, all of which follow in a greater or less degree the use of ardent spirits.

As well might we throw oil into a house, the roof of which was on fire, in order to prevent the flames from extending to its inside, as pour ardent spirits into the stomach, to lessen the effects of a hot sun upon the skin.

Nor do ardent spirits lessen the effects of hard labour upon the body. Look at the horse ; with every muscle of his body swelled from morning till night in the plough, or

a team, does he make signs for a draught of toddy, or a glass of spirits to enable him to cleave the ground, or to climb a hill?—No—he requires nothing but cool water, and substantial food. There is no nourishment in ardent spirits. The strength they produce in labour, is of a transient nature, and is always followed by a sense of weakness and fatigue.

Individuals are to be found who drink no spirits; and are they not noted in their neighbourhoods for tiring out those who drink spirits to support them in labour? And why is it so? Because their strength is uniform; neither raised nor exhausted by the stimulus of spirits.

If we can credit the account of our forefathers, when spiritous liquors in the field of labor were unknown; we shall find that the work of a day was fully equal, if not more than now, with all the aid of spirits.

Among the premiums offered, last year, by an Agricultural Sociey in New-York, there was one of twenty five dollars, to the farmer who should gather in the greatest quantity of grain and hay, without the use of ardent spirits.

Spirits inflame the blood, irritate the passions, and act as a powerful stimulus upon the whole frame. Except when taken in very immoderate quantities, they do not stupify and besot the faculties but rather excite them to keener action, and put their unhappy victims upon daring such new and destructive exploits as would hardly have entered into their minds at another time, much less have been entertained there. Let the case of some of the worst murders which have been before the public be considered: a few only shall be mentioned, but did space allow, a variety might be noticed.

James Ballard and John Merrit were poor men, living near each other in Lincoln county, N. C. and had it not been for drunkenness, that monster vice—that love-destroying sin, they might have contracted and maintained for one another the spirit of brothers. But meeting one day in one of those pernicious houses, a grog shop, where, as Solomon says of certain other seats of destruction, well-

known in his day, "many have been cast down wounded, yea many mighty men have been slain therein," they, as usual, presently got drunk and proceeded to quarrel and fight. After some blows had passed, Ballard snatched up the staff of an old flail, and therewith knocked Merrit down and continued his blows until he had literally beat him to death.

William Harveson, born in the neighbourhood of Camden, S. C. was for some offence confined in the prison bounds in Camden, which extended about a quarter of a mile south of Pine Creek. In the prison was employed David Russel as a tailor, working for the jailor and his family. When the tailor had finished his work and was about to depart for Statesburg, he invited Harveson to accompany him to the creek and take a parting drink with him. A bottle of rum was procured by the tailor: they went down to the creek, and seating themselves on a log began to drink. Russel soon became stupified; Harveson too was quite intoxicated, but not deprived of power to move. In this situation he all at once conceived the horrible idea of murdering his comrade; and obtaining a sledge lying at an indigo vat, close by, he gave the tailor a blow on his fore-head which knocked him down, but not being killed as might have been expected, he cried out with a feeble voice, "O Harveson, don't kill me, don't kill me!" This brought the wretch to a pause, but being drunk, and brutish as the swine that devours its young, with another blow he dashed out his brains! When Harveson was accused of the crime, he confessed it, and that he did not know why he had done it; but said he had no manner of ill will against the tailor.

James Madlock, ship-carpenter, Portsmouth, as he came home drunk with his broad-axe on his shoulder, killed his wife and three children, as they met him at the door. It appeared from testimony given in court, that he had mistaken his poor wife and children for vipers, coming to bite him.

In the winter of 1817, the Committee of superintendence for the relief of the poor, in Philadelphia, addressed

several queries to the charitable association of that city; the replies to which agree for substance, in the following statement; "It is a melancholy fact, that the excessive use of ardent spirits is the cause of the poverty, of a very large proportion of those who receive public charity, probably two-thirds; and there is no doubt but the alms which are bestowed on such are frequently expended in purchasing this article. We believe more money is expended in the course of a year by the poor for this destructive article, than would be sufficient, (if husbanded,) to provide for all their wants during an inclement winter."

"We have no doubt but the immoderate use of ardent spirits is the principal cause of poverty, at least in seven cases out of ten."

On a similar inquiry made a few years since, in Portland, Maine, an official statement, ascribes, as nearly as can be recollected, seven eighths of the pauperism in that town, to the same cause.

The Rev. J. King, Missionary in Charleston, South Carolina, in a Report which he read May, 1820, says, "In your *Orphan Asylum* are the descendants of those, who were once wealthy, and who spent their substance in riotous living. I have not had the means of ascertaining precisely, but it is thought by those best acquainted with that interesting establishment, that as many as two thirds, if not three fourths, of the children are brought there by the intemperance, or the idleness of their parents.

"The sum, annually expended for the support of this institution, is not far from \$22,000. Say two thirds of the children are of the above description, which is probably less than the reality. The City of Charleston, then, pays annually to this one institution, a tax of more than \$14,000, in consequence of intemperance, idleness, and other vices. Had the parents and grand parents of these children been sober, moral men, \$7,000 would have been sufficient, where this city now pays \$22,000.

At the *Poor House*, I have made diligent search, and find, that not far from three fourths of its occupants were brought there by intemperance. The expense of this establishment is annually about \$24,000.

"From my acquaintance with those at the *Marine Hospi-*
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tal, the winter past, I do not hesitate to say, that I think more than two thirds of them were brought there by the same cause, that is, in consequence of vice. The expense of this establishment, is about \$6,000 annually. Two thirds of this is about \$4,000, which this city pays, in the same way, in which it pays \$14,000 at the Orphan House, and \$18,000 at the Poor House, amounting in the whole, to \$36,000.

"I have also made inquiry with regard to those, who are aided in this city by the *Ladies Benevolent Society*, which would do honour to any city or nation under heaven. This society expends, annually, upwards of \$2,000, in relieving the distressed, "more than one half of whom," according to a statement given me by one of the officers of that Society, "have brought their poverty and wretchedness on themselves by intemperance and idleness.

"Besides what has been mentioned, I might advert to other minor charitable institutions, as also to the thousands of dollars given, every year, by private individuals, to those who have been plunged into pauperism in the same manner as those already mentioned. A tax, then, of at least \$40,000, and probably, 50 or \$60,000 is annually levied upon this city by vice.

"These are facts which ought to speak loudly, so as to be heard by every one, who aids in paying the public taxes, and every one who feels an interest in his country as a politician, or a Christian. These evils exist not only in this city, but in almost every city and village in the Union."

DISEASES OCCASIONED BY ARDENT SPIRITS.

1. A decay of appetite, sickness at stomach, and a puking of bile or a discharge of frothy and viscid phlegm by hawking, in the morning.

2. Obstructions of the liver. The fable of Prometheus, on whose liver a vulture was said to prey constantly, as a punishment for his stealing fire from heaven, was intended to illustrate the painful effects of ardent spirits upon the organs of the body.

3. Jaundice and dropsy of the belly and limbs, and finally of every cavity in the body. A swelling in the feet and legs is so characteristic a mark of habits of intemperance, that the merchants in Charleston, I have been told, cease to trust the planters of South Carolina, as soon as they perceive it. They very naturally conclude industry and virtue to be extinct in that man, in whom that symptom of disease has been produced by the intemperate use of distilled spirits.

4. Hoarseness, and a husky cough, which often terminate in consumption, and sometimes in an acute and fatal disease of the lungs.

5. Redness and eruptions on different parts of the body. They generally begin on the nose, and after gradually extending all over the face, sometimes descending to the limbs in form of leprosy. They have been called "Rumbuds," when they appear in the face. In persons who have occasionally survived these effects of ardent spirits on the skin, the face after a while becomes bloated, and its redness is succeeded by a death like paleness. Thus the same fire which produces a red colour in iron, when urged to a more intense degree, produces what has been called a white heat.

6. A fetid breath, composed of every thing that is offensive in putrid animal matter.

7. Frequent and disgusting belchings. Dr. Haller relates the case of a notorious drunkard having been suddenly destroyed in consequence of the vapour discharged from his stomach by belching accidentally taking fire, by coming in contact with the flame of a candle.

8. Epilepsy.

9. Gout in all its various forms of swelled limbs, colic, palsy, and apoplexy.

10. Madness. The late Dr Waters, while he acted as house pupil and apothecary of the Pennsylvania Hospital, assured me, that in one third of the patients confined by this terrible disease, it had been induced by ardent spirits.

Most of the diseases which have been enumerated are of a mortal nature. They are more certainly induced, and terminate more speedily in death, when spirits are taken in such quantities, and at such times, as to produce

frequent intoxication ; but it may serve to remove an error with which some intemperate people console themselves, to remark, that ardent spirits often bring on fatal diseases without producing drunkenness. I have known many persons destroyed by them, who were never completely intoxicated during the whole course of their lives. The solitary instances of longevity which are now and then met with in hard drinkers, no more disprove the deadly effects of ardent spirits, than the solitary instances of recoveries from apparent death by drowning, prove that there is no danger to life from a human body lying an hour or two under water.

I have classed death among the consequences of hard drinking. But it is not death from the immediate hand of the Deity, nor from any of the instruments of it which were created by him. It is death from suicide. Yes—thou poor degraded creature, who art daily lifting the poisoned bowl to thy lips—cease to avoid the unhallowed ground in which the self murderer is interred, and wonder no longer that the sun should shine, and the rain fall, and the grass look green upon his grave. Thou art perpetrating gradually, by the use of ardent spirits, what he has effected suddenly by opium—or a halter. Considering how many circumstances from surprise, or derangement, may palliate his guilt, or that (unlike yours) it was not preceded and accompanied by any other crime, it is probable his condemnation will be less than yours at the day of judgment.

END.







FATAL

ARDENT